

Spring 2015

Coping with Emotional Disturbance: Issues with Intervention Plans

David Helling

St. John Fisher College, dh05367@students.sjfc.edu

How has open access to Fisher Digital Publications benefited you?

Follow this and additional works at: http://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/education_ETD_masters

 Part of the [Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Helling, David, "Coping with Emotional Disturbance: Issues with Intervention Plans" (2015). *Education Masters*. Paper 298.

Please note that the Recommended Citation provides general citation information and may not be appropriate for your discipline. To receive help in creating a citation based on your discipline, please visit <http://libguides.sjfc.edu/citations>.

This document is posted at http://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/education_ETD_masters/298 and is brought to you for free and open access by Fisher Digital Publications at St. John Fisher College. For more information, please contact fisherpub@sjfc.edu.

Coping with Emotional Disturbance: Issues with Intervention Plans

Abstract

Emotional Disturbance may be the most misunderstood mental disability in the field of Special Education. Intervention plans are usually developed by Special Education teachers and school psychologists and used for the purpose of helping the student stay calm and focused in regular education classes. The purpose of this research is to challenge the idea of the containment of students that carry this label and study strategies and approaches that teach students the skills they need to not only be able to stay in a general education class, but to flourish and have successful academic careers. Literature Review

Document Type

Thesis

Degree Name

MS in Special Education

Department

Education

First Supervisor

Susan Schultz

Subject Categories

Education

**Coping with Emotional Disturbance:
*Issues with Intervention Plans***

By

David Helling

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree M.S. in Special
Education

Supervised by Dr. Susan M. Schultz

School of Education
St. John Fisher College

Abstract

Emotional Disturbance may be the most misunderstood mental disability in the field of Special Education. Intervention plans are usually developed by Special Education teachers and school psychologists and used for the purpose of helping the student stay calm and focused in regular education classes. The purpose of this research is to challenge the idea of the containment of students that carry this label and study strategies and approaches that teach students the skills they need to not only be able to stay in a general education class, but to flourish and have successful academic careers.

Literature Review

There are many classroom management challenges that educators can potentially face when they have students in their class that have some degree of emotional disturbance, especially when the educator is not a regular teacher in the classroom. Students with ED often manifest both externalizing and internalizing problems in school, which can be detrimental to their learning experience as well as the experience of other students around them (Reddy, Thomas, Newman & Chun, 2009). With appropriate strategies and intervention skills educators can help students with ED get the best possible education for themselves as well as develop life skills and coping strategies that will help them be successful, contributing members of society in their adult years. This study of different strategies and basic tips for teachers that have students with ED will provide a base for beginning an intervention program with the student and their parents.

One of the key elements behind being able to educate students with ED is understanding what it is and how it can affect students that suffer from it. The term “emotional disturbance” comes from the nation’s special education law and it applies to students that have a difficult time learning that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors (NICHCY, 2010). Students also fall under this umbrella term when they have an inability to build relationships with peers and teachers, inappropriate behavior under normal conditions and pervasive depression and unhappiness (NICHCY, 2010). However not all students that have ED exhibit these traits because of the many different forms that the disability can take.

Emotional disturbance can stem from a variety of different sources/events in a child’s life. These events can range from sexual or physical abuse to a traumatic event like witnessing the death of a loved one or even a bad accident (NICHCY, 2010). ED can also be hereditary or a brain disorder that comes from a more natural/genetic source. No one is sure of the direct cause of ED even though there has been an extensive amount of research done in the field (NICHCY, 2010). The emotional disturbance by itself is not usually considered a learning disability. However the disability does have an adverse effect on a student’s performance in school, which in turn can have a negative impact on their learning. As a result of this wide range of ED and the effect that it can have on a student’s education, students classified with ED arguably present the most complex academic and mental issues among children with or without disabilities (Reddy, Thomas, Newman & Chun, 2009).

As a result of ED being so complex and having a variety of different factors, there are several different strategies that teachers should include in their planning

and management of their classes. The first thing that teachers need to do is familiarize themselves with the student's specific mental health disturbance (Kupper, 2013). Knowledge of a student's disorder can give a teacher better insight into what strategies can help this particular student as well as build a relationship with the student, which can improve the success of intervention programs. During the process of getting to know your student it is crucial to understand that your student is still a child and not a scary ticking time bomb that is set to go off at any moment (Kupper, 2013). If your student is not treated like a human being the quality of the teacher student relationship will not be at a level that is capable of providing a productive and effective learning experience.

Some time after this relationship is established and the educator has a clear understanding of their student it is important to join the student's IEP team and help shape their program, adding elements that will improve their behavior and allow them to get the best possible educational experience (Kupper, 2013). It is important to keep in mind that students with ED do not represent a homogeneous population and that a student may react differently and exhibit different behaviors depending on which school contexts they might be subjected to (Wiley, Siperstein, Forness & Brigham, 2009). Data and input from other teachers about the student will produce knowledge that can change how an IEP team approaches the student's intervention plan.

Another key aspect to a teacher's success is communication with the parents throughout your intervention plan. Parents provide some of the best insights into any student, especially one with an emotional disturbance, and they are a great source to

consult with during the familiarization and relationship building process (Kupper, 2013). Of course communication with parents is a necessity with every child but with regards to a student with ED it is crucial that the lines of communication stay open at all times so parents can alert the teacher about medication changes, behavior changes at home and any new developments in the child's life (Kupper, 2013).

Intervention programs and classroom management strategies are going to vary depending on a child's specific needs, however there are a few things that a teacher can do in their class that would help students with ED maintain their focus and motivation. One of the first actions that should be taken is having a class schedule posted in the front of the classroom that lays out everything that students are expected to do in the class (atpe.org, 2012). There should be a breakdown of what are going to be done, how much time it will take and the expected behavior during each part of the class. Students will usually benefit from having visual aids or cues to help them transition between tasks as well (do2learn.com, 2013).

Grasping and maintaining a student with ED's attention is often a difficult task for an educator. One of the most important qualities of a teacher's style is to have a very structured and organized approach to their lessons and activities. This includes having the students recite in unison and being very visual with the presentation of materials and information. One of the worst things that an educator can do to the attention span of a student with ED is to go on extended digressions that are not relevant to the lesson. This is not only a distracting practice for a student with ED, but also for the teacher and many of the other students in the class. In contrast a teacher should stay focused and structured when presenting their lessons as well as break

long sections of the lecture into small and more condensed segments. This will also allow for more time to complete tasks for the student (Quinn, 2000).

It may be helpful for the student to engage in self-monitoring of their engagement and attentiveness in the class. This is a technique that can be set up by the teacher, who provides cues to the student like a bell at different times during the class and the student will record their level of engagement on a piece of paper or a whiteboard (do2learn.com, 2013). This activity doesn't necessarily need to be counted for a grade for the student but a reward for a certain percentage of full engagement for each class or each week is recommended so they are working towards something (do2learn.com, 2013). This activity also holds the students responsible for their own monitoring, which is a skill that someone with ED is going to need to learn how to do in all aspects of their life.

Another challenge that many educators may come in contact with when working with a student with ED is using reinforcers to manage unacceptable behavior and teaching the student a new behavior that will help them in the future. First the rule that is most commonly broken for a student needs to be addressed and the student needs to know specifically what the rule is and what it means to break that rule. When the student is observed breaking this rule the teacher needs to immediately use a reinforcement to remind the student of their behavior and a more acceptable alternative. This is extremely important to do immediately because any lapse in time between the behavior and the reinforcement will result in uncertainty over the behavior that is being enforced. When the behavior is being addressed and the new behavior is being taught it is also important for the educator to model the

correct behavior for the student. An important aspect of this mental condition to understand is that in many cases students with ED have very poor social and interaction skills. One of the best ways that they can understand how to act appropriately in certain situations is to model the correct behavior for them and engage in role play so the student can practice the correct behavior (Quinn, 2000).

One of the most important things that a teacher will need in order to make the best possible decisions about a child's program is to have a data plan set up that will track the student's behavior throughout the day (do2learn.com, 2013). Data is what will be the driving force and reasoning behind most of the decision making about what strategies will be most effective to help the student develop the skills to be socially and academically successful.

The next part of the behavior management part of the program is to develop clear and specific rules for the class and student. Examples of correct behavior will help with the clarity of what is expected out of the student and what actions are appropriate. Rewards should also be specified to the student for following the rules as well as the consequences for making the wrong decisions regarding them (do2learn.com, 2013). The teacher also has to be consistent when enforcing the rules for a student with ED because any alteration of rules, punishments and rewards can shatter the relationship and trust between the student and the teacher along with expectations that the two may have for each other (Ogonoski, 2012).

The final base behavior management aspect of a child's plan is the teacher understanding how the student reacts with different students and in different social settings. If there are certain settings and students that the student does not interact

with in a positive way then the teacher needs to recognize that and avoid situations that may escalate in a negative way (Ogonoski, 2012). With that it is important to teach the student coping skills when they are calm to help them deal with frustrating social situations that escalate out of control. If for some reason a situation does arise and the student becomes emotionally distraught, it is crucial for the teacher to remain calm, state the misconduct, and avoid arguing and being in direct confrontation with the student until they calm down (do2learn.com, 2013).

There is another program that also found great success for students with ED. The Musser, Bray, Kehle, and Jenson intervention program puts all of the expectations for students on their desk and when the students follow those rules they get a sticker posted on a board in the front of the class. Noncompliance with the teacher after 5 seconds and a redirection by the teacher in a calm manner will result in the removal of one of the stickers. When the student reaches a certain number of stickers they receive an envelope with a “mystery motivator” inside. This prize becomes more difficult to get as time goes on so it will push the student to work harder at their behavior skills in order to receive the reward (Reddy, Thomas, Newman & Chun, 2009). This type of strategy is obviously gauged more towards younger, primary students, but if it were modified it would work for secondary students as well.

The need to teach the student social skills is often the most overlooked aspect of an intervention plan. This doesn't necessarily mean that students are not corrected when they display inappropriate social behavior by their peers and teachers but they are not explicitly being taught how they should behave in certain social situations. Many students with ED do not have the skills to deal with difficult social situations for

a variety of reasons. With socialization being such a big part of the student's life in school and beyond, teachers need to provide them with basic rules and skills. This can be done in several different ways but one of the most common is modeling social behavior for the student and letting them see appropriate responses to social stimuli. Another fun and easy way to teach social skills is to role play with your student and set up different scenarios discussing what was done right during the play and what could have been improved on.

The last, and probably the most important aspect of socialization, is to teach the student how to recognize emotions and cues from facial features and signals from other people (do2learn.com, 2013). A common characteristic of people with ED is the impaired ability to judge a person's emotion and intent. Often this misjudgment can lead to a crisis situation that will end negatively for everyone involved. This can be done with magazines and pictures online to teach the student facial cues that can provide insight into how someone else is feeling. From there they can also begin to learn about perspectives.

A key step in the implementation of an intervention plan is to make sure that all of the expectations for the individual child are made aware to all of the adults that will be involved in the education of this student. This includes all teachers, administrators, parents, and even lunch and bus monitors. This is important because all of the adults in this student's life have to enforce the same rules in the same way so that change can happen over time for the student. One of the hardest aspects of an intervention plan to carry out is consistency under all circumstances for this child. If

there are inconsistencies the student is at risk of being confused about correct behaviors and reactions to social and educational cues (Quinn, 2000).

Beyond some of these basic steps of an intervention program there is additional training available to teachers that can greatly reduce the amount of crisis situations that a student might display in a classroom. A study that was done by Carol A. Dawson on the effectiveness of a training program called Life Space Crisis Intervention showed promising results in the number of behavior infractions within a group of students that were classified with ED. For this study LSCI training was given to a specific group of teachers to study the effect of its reclaiming processes. The study was done with an experimental group, which consisted of students with ED that used the reclaiming stages of the LSCI process, and a control group that consisted of students with ED that were given traditional control-driven interventions when they entered into a crisis situation. The results of the test were consistent with the hypotheses that Life Space Crisis Intervention gives staff a sense of personal efficacy and shows visible improvement on the number of crisis situations that a student enters into (Dawson, 2003).

LSCI is a therapeutic program for students with ED that uses a student's crisis to teach them about accountability and give them personal insight into their life and their actions (Dawson, 2003). This program has some traditional elements of containment and control through intervention but it goes beyond and attempts to connect with students and teach them about themselves and patterns of self-defeating behavior during crisis (Dawson, 2003). It is, in its own way, a form of metacognition only it is not used in an academic fashion. The results of using LSCI in

the experimental district were all positive for both the teachers and the students. One teacher even said, "I used to be afraid of the students with ED and not know what to say or do. I am now confident in my abilities and know what to say and do. Now I am confident in my abilities and I find that every time I use Life Space Crisis Intervention, I become closer to the students, and now they come to me when they have problems. It feels good to make a difference in their lives." (Dawson, 2003, p. 228).

Janice A. Grskovic and Herbert Goetze did a similar study on the effects of LSCI on challenging behavior. Their study was on 4 individual students and was more of a qualitative case study. Their results showed that there was a significant reduction of disruptive behavior for the students after the LSCI reclaiming interventions were introduced as part of their plan. They also reported that the students developed an improved relationship with the educator that was responsible for interviewing and managing the students with the LSCI strategies (Grskovic, 2005).

One of the most interesting things that I found with the Life Space Crisis Intervention program is that it offers several styles of interviews and approaches that can be used on a student in crisis. This allows for the educator to adapt to the students individual needs and help them discover their self-defeating behavior and gives the interviewer an opportunity to teach the student different strategies to overcome this behavior. The correlation between many methods outlined in literature about students with ED is that these students need to be aware of their behavior and modify it to make them successful in school.

To often students with emotional disturbance are viewed as scary and unpredictable by teachers and other faculty members of a school district. It is almost

as if the label automatically makes the student a ticking time bomb. This misconception is one of the many reasons that many students with ED are not successful in school. About 55% of students with ED end up dropping out of school before they graduate and about 10% of students with ED are incarcerated within 5 years after school (Wagoner, 1995). This statistic may be old but there are more current numbers that are similar from less reputable sources. This category of students present some of the most difficult challenges that teachers can face when trying to individualize a plan to help them succeed in public school. However with the proper training and knowledge of the disability, teachers will be able to develop more efficient intervention plans for them, decrease the amount of crisis situations that occur in class, and create a better learning environment for everyone that is a part of the class.

Research Introduction

There are many classroom management challenges that educators can potentially face when they have students in their class that are classified with emotional disturbance. Students with ED often manifest both externalizing and internalizing problems in school, which can be detrimental to their learning experience. The purpose of my research will be discovering the most effective classroom and behavior intervention plans that can be used to facilitate learning for students classified with ED. I will also be researching the most common errors that educators make when they are implementing an intervention plan for students classified with ED. Through this research I will find the most effective strategies and methods that educators can implement to give a student with ED the best possible learning experience.

Another issue that needs to be addressed is the process by which educators, bus drivers, substitute teachers, and other adults in the student's life are informed of their specific intervention plan. Often when there is a plan put in place for a student with ED other individuals are not aware of or even trained to be able to apply strategies to help this student be successful and to help them avoid crisis situations. So the other question that I will be answering in this section is what kind of protocol should be put in place for content area teachers and substitutes to be made aware of the intervention plans for students with ED?

The Study

The study that was conducted on this subject was both qualitative and quantitative in nature. The study was conducted in a rural school district where the average class size K-12 is between 30 and 50 students. This district is not very diverse in its population compared to many urban and suburban districts, however for the purposes of this research the ethnic and socioeconomic diversity of the school is not an important factor.

The first part of the research was a quantitative study in which a short survey of 10 questions was given to every educator in the building including teacher aids. The questions were aimed at collecting statistical data for the school such as how many educators that responded have had students in their class that were classified with Emotional Disturbance and how many of them had interventions plans in place for them. Out of the 10 questions there was one that asked teachers to provide details about the intervention plans that they helped implement and some of the common strategies that they used. Out of all of the survey's that were distributed I received 31 responses.

The second part of my research was the qualitative study in which I interviewed two teachers and one administrator using questions that were formulated based on the results of the quantitative study. This was done to avoid gathering information that was not relevant to the direction that the research was going. In these interviews questions were intended to gather real educators thoughts on intervention plans that they have had experience with and what aspects of these plans that they would change if they could as well as some strategies that seemed to

work well. This part of the research provided more depth to how teachers feel about plans that they have had experience with and how effective the communication is between special education teachers and general education teachers during the intervention process. Finally the interview concluded with a couple of questions about Life Space Crisis Intervention and whether or not the educators would be interested in learning about this technique.

Hypothesis

The questions that are being asked in this study will likely provide results that many educators and administrators would find troublesome. The literature suggests that there are some gaps in many students' intervention plans where some of the adult influences involved in an intervention are not using the same approaches and strategies to help the student be successful in their academic and social life. I hypothesize that this trend is going to be seen in some of the surveys that were given to educators.

Another hypothesis that will be made before the study is carried out is that many of the strategies that are used for students with ED are going to be somewhat generic. Not that the strategies are not going to be effective but rather that many of them are going to be used across the board with all student's with these plans in place as if every student that is classified with Emotional Disturbance is going to benefit from the same style of intervention plan. This idea can lead us to one of the misconceptions that educators and the general public have about a student that

carries this label in their individualized education program. Every student is different and has different needs and students with ED are no exception to this.

One strategy, or way of approaching a student in crisis, that probably not be familiar to very many educators is Life Space Crisis Intervention. Research suggests that this approach is extremely effective when used appropriately for students that are in crisis, which is an often occurrence for a student with ED. If educators are not aware of this strategy, or any others that prove to be beneficial, then they will not be able to develop the most effective intervention plan possible for their students.

Data Analysis

The amount of responders to the surveys that were distributed was higher than what was expected. In a single school district I received 31 completed surveys from educators and administrators in the building. Having this number made the statistical analysis of this district more attainable and more reliable.

The makeup of this group of 31 educators consisted of 24 general education teachers and 7 special education teachers. This is almost a mirror image of the ratio of general education teachers to special education teachers in the school so this helps the data reflect the schools educators as a whole when we are talking about percentages.

Out of these 31 educators that completed the survey 25 of them have had experience with students with Emotional Disturbance. This ends up being about 80%, which seems to be a relatively high number for a small rural district. Of the 25

educators that had experience with ED only 20 of them followed intervention plans for this student. That means that at least 5 students that were classified with this disability did not even have a plan in place for them.

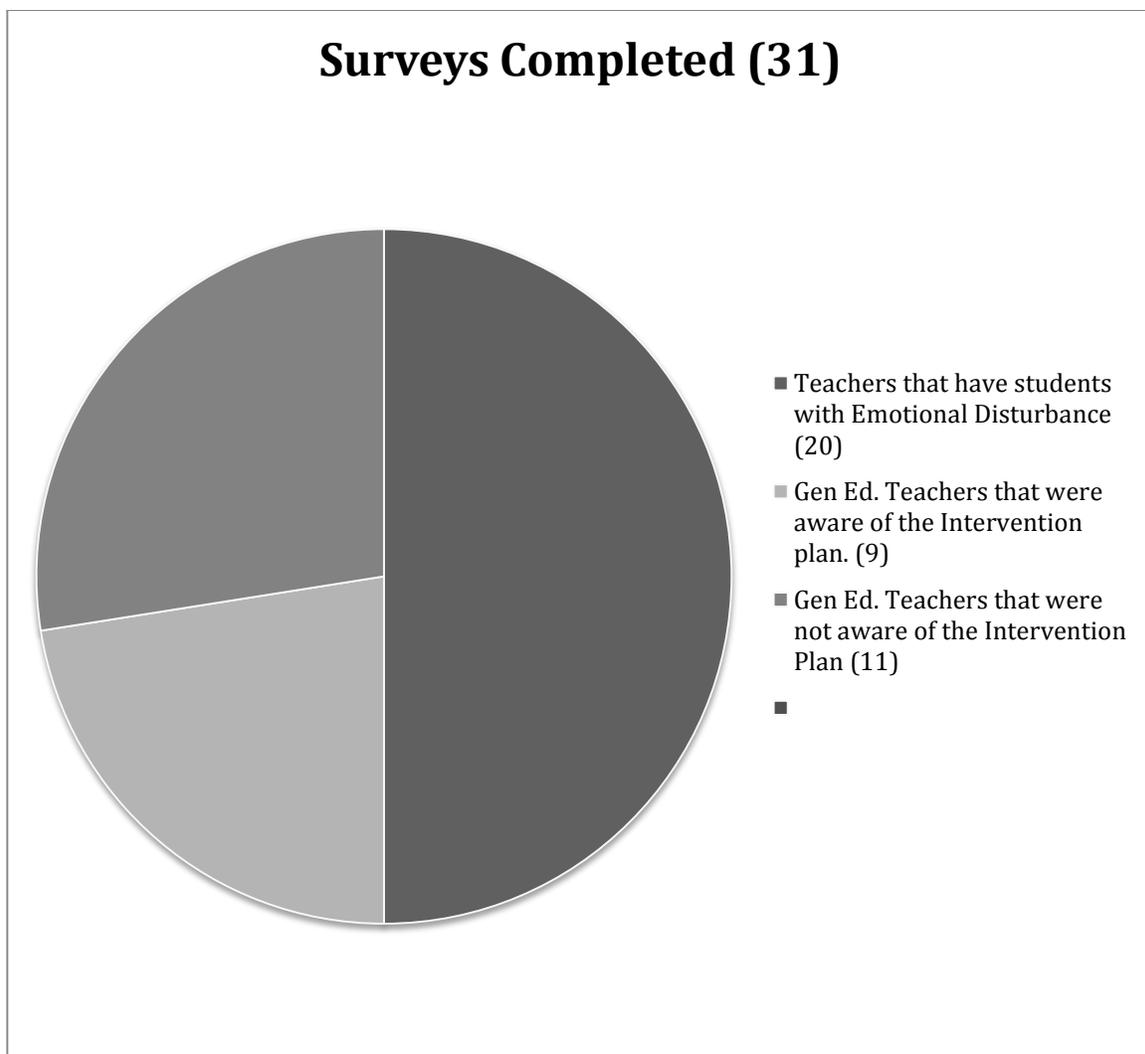
The amount of general education teachers that replied to the survey was 24 and the number that claimed that they were made fully aware of an intervention plan for a student with ED is 11. This is less than 50% of the general education population that was involved in intervention plans that was in place for their students. Of the remaining 13 teachers, 9 said that they were confused or unclear about the details of the plan and how it was to be carried out in every day situations.

Of the teachers that were aware of the intervention plans that were in place for their students, including the special education teachers, there seemed to be a common trend with some of the strategies that were used for students with ED to be successful in their classrooms. This included using visuals, planned ignoring, special seating arrangements and scheduled breaks from the classroom when the student is feeling like they are close to being in a crisis situation. There was also a heavy emphasis on a rewards/incentive program for these students to help encourage the student to make the right decisions.

One of the common suggestions that these educators had for improving aspects of a student's plan or the implementation of the plan was more support from administrators. Teachers also seemed to be concerned with making clear expectations to students, parents, and all of the teachers that would be involved in the plan. Another interesting suggestion that one general education teacher made was to have the classmates of the student with ED go through some sort of brief training or

an awareness seminar to help the student's make the right decisions to avoid entering into the conflict cycle with their peers.

The final part of this survey asked if the educators are familiar with Life Space Crisis Intervention. Of the 31 teachers surveyed only 3 of them said that they have heard of it. It is important to note that all 3 of these teachers reported that they have only heard of the strategy, not familiar or trained to be able to use it.



Discussion

The findings of this study supported all of the hypotheses to some degree. As a result of the response to the survey being so high the data that was collected was enough to draw some concrete conclusions.

The amount of general education teachers that said they were not fully aware of certain aspects of a student's intervention plan was very troubling. When less than 50% of the general education teacher population is educated in the strategies that are supposed to be used when a student with ED enters into a crisis situation, these normally harmless outbursts can become disastrous. The main goal of intervention plans is to decrease, or even eliminate crisis situations for the student that they are intended for. This is going to be extremely difficult to achieve if a teacher cannot take the necessary steps/precautions to prevent these occurrences. In the event that a student does enter into a crisis situation the teacher will not know how to deal with the situation appropriately, which could lead to the entire learning environment being jeopardized for all of the students involved. It can also be dangerous for people in the room given the nature of the student and the situation.

Another troubling statistic was that, according to the surveys, there were at least five students that had some degree of Emotional Disturbance that did not have a plan in place for them. This is a problem because either the teacher that filled out the survey didn't know anything about an intervention plan for their student or someone decided that, even though there is an identified emotional issue in a student, a plan was not necessary for them. If the school psychologist has identified emotional problems in a student then there should always be some sort of plan in place with

protocols that teachers and other adults can follow if the students find themselves in need of adult intervention to avoid a crisis situation.

Some of the strategies that were used by these educators were similar. This could be the result of two different factors. Many of the strategies outlined by the survey responses are also found in the literature that was reviewed prior to this study. This could mean that they are highly effective and have been proven to work for some students with Emotional Disturbance. On the other hand many of the teachers that completed the survey could have had the same student in a different class, in which case the intervention plan that the student has would not change depending on the classroom. With that being said many of these strategies seem very simple and surface level controlling mechanisms for these students. There was no evidence in the surveys that suggested the methods used in the intervention plans were designed to actually teach the student how to cope with a situation that might make them uncomfortable or create a crisis situation for them.

Teachers in this school district seem to all agree that the best improvement that can be made with regards to the development and implementation of an intervention plan is more support from the administrators in the building. This shows me that there may not be strong administrative support for behavioral situations that these teachers encounter, which is likely to occur more often if they have a student with ED. If this is the issue in this district, then the problem is rooted deeper than having or not having an effective disciplinary system. The idea behind an intervention plan is not to have to constantly discipline a student for emotional outbursts but rather to teach the student about their emotions and provide them with

strategies that they can use on their own to cope with emotions that cause them to misbehave. If a student is constantly being referred to an administrator as a result of behavior problems then the plan that is place for that student is not effective. Now if this logic was used more often by educators when they are developing or modifying a students IEP and intervention plan, then the teachers could use data and incorporate new strategies to be proactive with the plan. The ultimate goal here is to keep the student in the classroom and provide them with learning experiences that will help them in school, at home, and in their future lives to properly deal with their emotions in a constructive way rather than being destructive.

Life Space Crisis Intervention

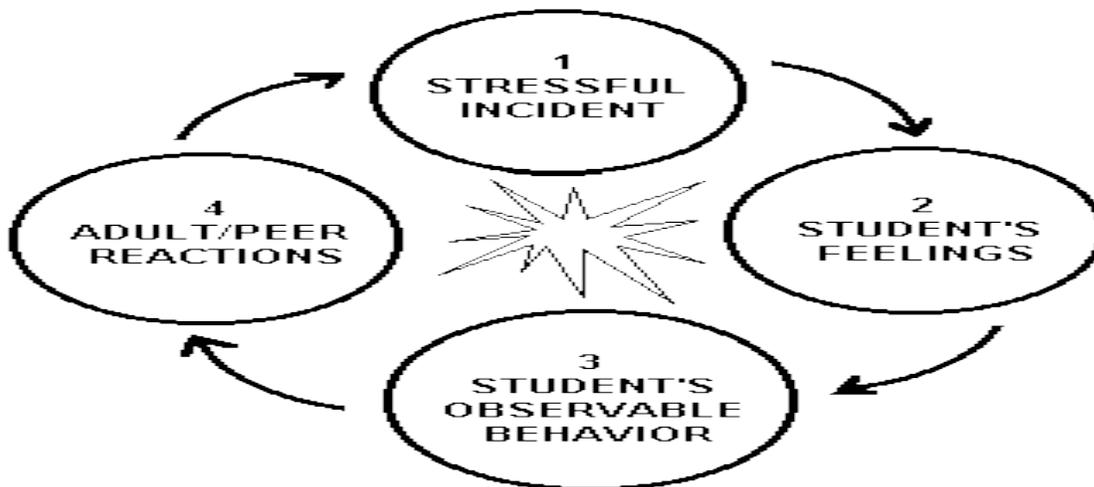
The qualitative aspect of this study, where teachers were individually interviewed, supports that data that was collected from the quantitative study. The interesting part of the interviews and the surveys was that none of the teachers in this district are trained in Life Space Crisis Intervention. As outlined in the literature review section, LSCI is a relatively new approach to helping a student who is in crisis that has proven to be highly effective in reducing the frequency of crisis situations not only in a single student, but throughout the school where it is used. The qualitative study that was done by Janice A. Grskovic and Herbert Goetze show how this therapeutic program can be used to significantly reduce the number of crisis situation that a student can enter into and limit the observed disruptive behavior by the student. With the studies that have been done on the effectiveness of these reclaiming

interventions, it is troubling to think that school districts would not consider offering this training to their staff members. The main objective of our public school system is to provide every student with the tools to be successful and move on to be productive members of society. Through this we can strengthen our community and uphold the intellectual integrity of our country. How can we do this if we do not take advantage of progressive styles of intervention for students that are experiencing difficult emotional experiences in their lives that are effecting their education?

Life Space Crisis Intervention training can, and has done this for educators all over the country. The approach that is used by this set of reclaiming interventions is a multi-step process that provides the opportunity for students to recognize and understand their emotions and their actions. The major paradigm that is associated with LSCI is the conflict cycle. This model can be used to show how the relationship between a stressful incident and adult/child interaction can create an escalating conflict that can be detrimental to the student's education as well as their perception of the adult. It also gives the adult that is performing the reclaiming intervention the chance to teach the student a new life skill. This can mean several different things like teaching the appropriate ways to interact with someone or something that might make a person uncomfortable, or even just teaching them a coping strategy that they can use to help the persevere through a difficult time in their lives. It is not just students that are classified with having Emotional Disturbance that can experience a crisis situation while they are at school. So what can a general education teacher, with no special education training, do for a student that has this happen to them if they are not trained to handle the situation and use it as an opportunity to teach the student

something that could help them for the rest of their lives? The idea that it is the counselor or special education teacher's job to "handle" a student that is emotionally unstable is outdated and as an educational community we need to realize that we all play a role in our student's lives and we need to be given the tools that we need to help every student be successful in our schools, which means being prepared to approach every situation with an objective frame of mind and using proactive approaches to provide the student with self-awareness and a new skill.

The Conflict Cycle



Recommendations

One of the most undeniable conclusions that can be taken away from this research is there is not enough cooperation between professionals in school about intervention plans for students. The statistics that were found during the research suggest that about 50% of the time general education teachers are not fully involved

in the intervention plan and if more research were conducted the number would be higher among other adults like lunch monitors and school bus drivers. The best thing an adult can do in this situation is to connect with the special education teacher to learn all of the details of the student's intervention plan. Without these open lines of communication between all of the adult influences in the student's life, the plan that was developed is all but useless.

The objectives of a student's intervention plan need to be clearly outlined and discussed by the educators involved in creating it. These objectives need to be proactive and serve the student, not the teacher. The traditional approach of containing the student and trying to prevent disruptions through generic means is not going to be proactive. Educators need to take the initiative to teach the student about their behaviors and provide them with strategies that they can use everyday to self-monitor their behavior. According to the literature that was reviewed for this study, one of the most successful ways to do this is to use the Life Space Crisis Intervention approach.

Taking advantage of professional development opportunities is also crucial to successful intervention plans. However this can be difficult to do for most teachers if their school district does not offer professional development seminars that are relevant to the indisputable issues within the district. One professional development opportunity that all school districts should offer to not only their teachers, but all of their faculty that is in direct contact with students, is LSCI training. The Life Space Crisis Intervention Institute offers 1 day and ½ day course opportunities that provide professionals with an understanding of the conflict cycle and how they can use this

model to turn a crisis situation into a learning experience. There are several other options offered by the LSCI institute that can fit the needs of a district, or just an individual that is seeking training to broaden their classroom management skills.

Final Thoughts

Over 50% of all student dropouts have emotional disturbance. This devastating statistic proves that there is not enough work being done on the part of educators to help this group of students be successful with their academics. There is not enough collaboration between teachers, administrators, parents, and other faculty members in the school. If an environment can be created where we use research based methods are used in intervention plans, have open lines of communication between all adults in the student's life, and take the initiative to understand all aspects of a student's plan, the statistic will reduce drastically. With this we will also create a proactive educational atmosphere where all students can receive their appropriate education and have the opportunity to live successful lives and be an asset to our community.

Works Cited

- Bagner, Daniel M. Rodriguez, Gabriela M. Blake, Clair A. Linares Dainelys. Carter, Alice S. (2012). *Assessment of Behavioral and Emotional Problems in Infancy: A Systematic Review*. Springer Science+Buisness Media, 113-124
- Dawson, Carol. (2003). *A Study on the Effectiveness of Life Space Crisis Intervention for Students Identified with Emotional Disturbances*. *Reclaiming Children and Youth*, 223-230
- Ehrler, David J. Mcghee, Ronnie L. Phillips, Carol G. Allen, Elizabeth A. (2009). *Differential Scales of Social Maladjustment and Emotional Disturbance*. *Mental Measurements Yearbook with Tests in Print*,
- Emotional Disturbance. (2010). In *NICHCY*. Retrieved November 14, 2014, from <http://nichcy.org/disability/specific/emotionaldisturbance>
- Emotional Disturbance Strategies. (2013). In *Do2Learn*. Retrieved November 10, 2014, from: <http://www.do2learn.com/disabilities/CharacteristicsAndStrategies/EmotionalDisturbanceStrategies.html>
- Grskovic, J., & Goetze, H. (2005). An Evaluation of the Effects of Life Space Crisis Intervention on the Challenging Behavior of Individual Students. *Reclaiming Children and Youth*, 4(13), 231-235.
- Kupper, L. (2013). Teaching Students with Emotional Disturbance: 8 Tips for Teachers. In *NICHCY*. Retrieved November 8, 2014, from <http://nichcy.org/teaching-students-with-e-d>
- Quinn, M. et al. (2000). Education Strategies for Children with Emotional and

Behavioral Problems. Retrieved November 10, 2014

Reddy, Linda. Thomas, Courtney. Newman, Eric. Chun, Victoria. (2009). *School Based Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children with Emotional Disturbance: A Review of Treatment Components and Methodology*. *Psychology in Schools*, 132-149

Wagner, Mary M. (1995). *Outcomes for Youths with Serious Emotional Disturbance in Secondary School and Early Adulthood*. *The Future of Children*. 90-112

Wiley, Andrew L. Forness, Steven R. Siperstein G.N. Brigham F.J. (2009). *School Context and the Problem Behavior and Social Skills of Students with Emotional Disturbance*. Springer Science+Business Media, 451-461

Wilson D. R. Vidal B. Wilson W. A. Salyer S. L. (2012). *Overcoming Sequelae of Childhood Sexual Abuse with Stress Management*. *Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing*, 587-593

Ogonoski, Andrea. (2012). *Emotionally Disturbed Children*. Association of Texas Professional Teachers.

<http://www.atpe.org/Resources/Student%26ParentIssues/emoDisturb.asp>